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Congress of the United States
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To Whom It May Concern,

With the Biden administration caught off guard by the rapid collapse of the Afghan government, and the subsequent evacuation of some 120,000 people¹ from the Kabul airport, groups like yours are now filling major gaps in our response to the massive influx of Afghans into our country – owing largely to the White House’s unprecedented lack of planning and abdication of responsibility.

The Pentagon indicated as of this weekend that just 5,100 of those airlifted out of Afghanistan are U.S. citizens² and roughly 7,000 were Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients³ (although none of those housed at Fort McCoy held a valid SIV as of Friday⁴). However, we know very little about the other 100,000 or so people who have arrived – and will continue arriving – in the United States.

What we do know is that vetting procedures that previously took months or years have been hastily conducted for many of those currently arriving to just days or hours. Making matters worse, NBC News reported that preliminary biometric screening capabilities were not in place at Hamid Karzai International Airport⁵ and CNN quoted a Customs and Border Protection official who characterized the White House priority as “get[ting] as many people on the plane as you can, and we’ll sort out the (immigration visa) stuff later.” The same source added that “some people have landed with no documents whatsoever, creating a very challenging work environment for the officers.”⁶

My office has assisted, since this crisis began, with getting those Afghans who participated in sensitive U.S. military, diplomatic and intelligence activities out of the country. I strongly support admitting these individuals to the United States and will continue to assist with that effort however I can. However, not every Afghan national seeking to enter the U.S. fits into that category, and we must all work together to ensure that those who did not directly support

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/aug/29/joe-biden-13-us-troops-killed-kabul-dover-airforce-base-afghanistan-taliban-islamic-state-drone-strikes>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/western-nations-race-complete-afghan-evacuation-deadline-looms-2021-08-25/>

³ <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2021/08/27/evacuations-wind-down-thousands-of-us-partners-left-behind>

⁴ <https://www.wsaw.com/2021/08/27/wisconsin-congressmen-tour-fort-mccoy-refugees-come/>

⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/fury-disgust-cia-pentagon-congress-thousands-afghans-will-be-left-n1277552>

⁶ <https://archive.is/zRK7f#selection-1429.0-1485.66>

American efforts are thoroughly screened and vetted before being released into American neighborhoods.

As you know, U.S. immigration officials now face major challenges when it comes to independently verifying the backgrounds of, and claims made by many of those arriving given that Afghan national and provincial governments no longer exist. Even when the Kabul government was functioning during the first three months of this year, a whopping 84 percent of Afghan SIV applications were rejected.⁷

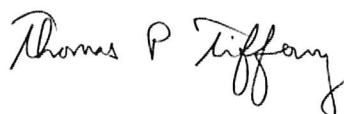
Complicating matters further, the White House has been vague and inconsistent when asked about the nature and timing of evacuee screening. An administration official claimed two weeks ago that this was happening in Qatar and Kuwait⁸ – a claim Pentagon spokesman John Kirby appeared to contradict the same day, saying that “processing” of arrivals would occur at sites inside the United States.⁹ Some alert U.S. officials have already detected dangerous individuals who managed to slip through the haphazard screening procedures and board flights out of Afghanistan.¹⁰

This is a deeply disconcerting situation given that Afghanistan is arguably the most dangerous country on earth, a failed state, and a headquarters for multiple foreign terrorist organizations. In addition, officials at Fort McCoy informed me last week that Afghan nationals housed at the facility are free to leave the base – without any check-in or monitoring requirements – making this lack of thorough vetting and screening even more alarming.

The burden is now on groups like yours to “say something” if you “see something.”

As organizations who are working to resettle migrants arriving in Wisconsin, it now falls on you to make sure the Biden administration and groups like the International Organization for Migration have fully vetted Afghan nationals before they disappear into our communities. You must exercise due diligence by observing, asking questions, and sharing any significant information with the appropriate authorities. Americans are counting on you.

Sincerely,



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress

⁷ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/17/rush-approve-afghan-visas-poses-serious-risks/>

⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/18/afghan-refugee-debate-fractures-gop-506135>

⁹ <https://www.fox6now.com/news/afghanistan-refugees-wisconsin-fort-mccoy>

¹⁰ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/30/convicted-rapist-reached-us-afghan-evacuation-flig/>